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C O N F I D E N T I A L WARSAW 002889

SIPDIS

EUR FOR A/S FRIED; NSC FOR DAMON WILSON

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MARR](#) [PL](#)

SUBJECT: EUR ASSISTANT SECRETARY FRIED BREAKFAST WITH CIVIC
PLATFORM LEADER JAN ROKITA

Classified By: CDA, A.I., MARY T. CURTIN, FOR REASONS 1.5 (B) AND (D)

SUMMARY

11. (C) EUR A/S Dan Fried held a breakfast meeting July 11 with Jan Rokita, the head of the centrist Civic Platform (PO). Rokita, who is likely to become Prime Minister should PO lead a coalition government after the September 2005 parliamentary elections, reviewed the political state of play in the lead-up to the elections, describing honesty in government and economic competitiveness as the top issues. On foreign policy, Fried urged Rokita to meet with Iraq Coordinator Ambassador Richard Jones and CENTCOM Deputy Commander General Smith during their upcoming visit to Warsaw. He also urged Rokita to think of Polish-U.S. bilateral relations in new terms, with Poland as a partner of the U.S. and regional leader. End Summary

DOMESTIC POLITICS

12. (C) Fried, accompanied by Ambassador, NSC Director for Central, Eastern and Northern Europe Damon Wilson, and PolCouns, met July 11 with Rokita, who was accompanied by Jacek Saryusz-Wolski, a PO Member of the European Parliament and informal foreign policy advisor to Rokita. Fried asked Rokita for a preview of the upcoming parliamentary and presidential elections. Rokita complained about the election schedule, with presidential elections just two weeks after the September 25 parliamentary elections. It not only pits PO against its likely coalition partner, Law and Justice (PiS), but also means that the parties must, in effect have two leaders--a presidential candidate and parliamentary list leader, and run two campaigns at once. Rokita said he could not predict which party, PO or PiS, would lead the coalition, noting that PiS had pulled ahead of PO in recent months. He predicted that if PiS leads, it could hurt PiS leader Lech Kaczynski's chances in the October 9 presidential voting, as Poles tend to balance their voting, and do not want to see twin brothers (Jaroslaw Kaczynski heads PiS's parliamentary list) as President and Prime Minister. Rokita said he believes the two parties will have a clear majority of parliamentary seats. If not, however, they will not look to the Catholic nationalist League of Polish Families (LPR). He described LPR leader Roman Giertych as "extremely talented," and said he is pushing the party to "evolve," but LPR's position is weakened by the past Communist associations of Roman's father, Maciej Giertych, who is also LPR's presidential candidate.

13. (C) Rokita cited honesty in government as the most critical issue facing the next administration. He defined the problem as including corruption, but extending also to a tolerance for the lack of rule of law, and the weakness of the state. The second critical issue for the next government will be economic competitiveness, including labor market problems, taxes, the budget deficit, and barriers to entrepreneurship. PO and PiS have their greatest differences on these issues. PO, he said, has a clearly liberal economic outlook, while PiS is more statist, wanting a strong government hand to protect various groups in society, including those with jobs in certain sectors. (Saryusz-Wolski called Kaczynski a "traditional socialist" on social/economic issues.) Rokita said PO will insist on its economic platform if it leads a coalition. He described what he saw as a "generational change" in economic outlooks, with economic liberals having a chance to be strong.

FOREIGN POLICY AND
POLAND'S EVOLVING ROLE

14. (C) Turning to foreign policy issues, Fried said we want to see a strong Europe that is a partner, not a rival, of the U.S. Amb. Ashe added that we see Poland playing a strong role in shaping a new vision of Europe. On Iraq, Fried said we are making progress politically, with the government

gaining legitimacy. As this happens, the military will also keep gaining legitimacy, and become more capable, allowing coalition partners to stand back. Fried briefed Rokita on the upcoming visit of Iraq Coordinator Amb. Richard Jones and CENTCOM Deputy Commander Smith to Poland, and urged him to accept a briefing on the situation in Iraq (to which other opposition parties would also be invited).

15. (C) Fried emphasized to Rokita the importance we attach to Polish-U.S. bilateral relations. He urged Rokita, who is

normally focused almost entirely on domestic political issues, to think about Poland's future as a regional and world leader. Poland now counts in Europe, he said, and its views are taken seriously in Washington. President Bush has good relations with Polish President Kwasniewski, and talks to him not just about issues to the east but also to the west. He urged that PO and PiS leaders consider sending a team to Washington as soon as possible after elections, if it turns out they form the next government.

16. (C) Rokita responded that he appreciated the "kind words" about Poland's role, but said he is also a "realist," and knows there are many more important countries in the world, mentioning Russia in this context. Voicing a sentiment shared by many in his party and PiS, he said Poland does not always feel it is important to the U.S. Poles, he said, often feel disappointed with the level of Poland's relationship with the U.S., and feel theirs is an "unrequited love." Pro-Americanism in Poland, he said, has diminished. Fried argued that Rokita was mistaken about the U.S. view of Poland. The U.S. works, for example, to have good relations with Russia, but it will not sacrifice its friends to be friends with Putin. Fried pointed to the President's trip to Moscow in May, preceded and followed by trips to Riga and Tblisi. Saryusz-Wolski responded that Poles had "taken note" of Bush's message and appreciated it.

17. (C) Fried continued that Polish-U.S. relations used to be about Poland--about Poland's freedom and then Poland's place in Europe. Those problems have been solved, and the new leadership of Poland should start to think of U.S.-Polish relations on a new level. When Rokita responded that Poland was still a "poor country," with "limited ability to be a partner," Fried responded by urging Rokita to stop thinking in terms of "poor, courageous Poland" and start thinking of the future, when Poland will be a prosperous country, able to play a leading European as well as regional role. Poland's new leadership needs to think of Poland as a partner of the U.S., not as a client or a recipient of assistance, and urged him to plan for Poland as it will be in 15 years, not as it was in the past.

18. (C) A/S Fried has cleared the text of this cable.
CURTIN